

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00380 01 OF 02 281614Z  
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 ACDA-12 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05  
TRSE-00 /096 W  
-----063866 281712Z /40

O R 281505Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6842  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0380

E.O 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PORG, WA  
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: DELAYING ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION DATE

REF: (A) USUN 0655, (B) STATE 047788,

1. SUMMARY: VORSTER WILL BE STRONG IN HIS DESIRE TO  
MEET HIS COMMITMENT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTIONS "MUST  
NOT BE DELAYED TOO LONG." THERE APPEAR TO BE OPENINGS  
WHICH MIGHT BE EXPLOITED TO DELAY SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT EVEN  
PAST WHAT VORSTER MAY AT PRESENT CONSIDER THE ULTIMATE  
DEADLINE. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE SAG RECENTLY HAS BEEN GIVING CONFLICTING SIGNALS  
ABOUT THE URGENCY OF MOVING AHEAD WITH AN EARLY ELECTION  
ANNOUNCEMENT. ON FEB. 23, BOTHA IN WINDHOEK, SEEMED  
TO SUGGEST THAT SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BECOME  
SOMEWHAT LESS URGENT WHEN HE INDICATED THAT THE  
INDEPENDENCE DATE COULD POSSIBLY SLIP BEYOND THE END  
OF THIS YEAR (CAPE TOWN 0356). DIRK MUDGE ALSO RECENTLY

TOLD OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUES THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD BEFORE SEPTEMBER. IN WINDHOEK, HOWEVER, BOTHA ALSO STRESSED THE ALLEGED DESIRE OF THE POPULATION "THAT THINGS SHOULD NOW BE BROUGHT TO A CLOSE." AND IN HIS REMARKS IN PARLIAMENT ON FEB. 24 (CAPE TOWN 0366) HE RETURNED TO A PESSIMISTIC LEITMOTIF. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTEMPTING TO FIND AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT AND DID NOT MENTION THE REPUTED URGENCY OF MOVING AHEAD WITH ELECTIONS. IN SIMILAR SPIRIT, THE SAG-OWNED SABC, WHICH REFLECTS GOVERNMENT POLICY, EDITORIALIZED ON FEB. 27 "THE DETERMINATION TO KEEP ON NEGOTIATING IN ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND, AND THE PROSPECT IS SUBSTANTIALLY MORE HOPEFUL THAN IT WAS TWO WEEKS AGO" (JOHANNESBURG 491).

3. VORSTER IS PREPARING THE GROUND FOR DETACHING SA FROM THE WESTERN INITIATIVE WHILE KEEPING THE WAY OPEN TO PURSUE THAT INITIATIVE YET AWHILE LONGER. THROUGH BOTHA HE IS SPEAKING TO TWO, PERHAPS THREE, AUDIENCES. HIS OWN PEOPLE ARE BEING PREPARED FOR A GO-IT-ALONE DECISION SHOULD IT COME. NAMIBIANS ARE BEING CAUTIONED THE INTERNATIONAL TRACK MIGHT BE FOLLOWED FOR A LONGER TIME THAN ANTICIPATED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE EFFORT CONTINUES TO PERSUADE THE OUTSIDE WORLD THAT SA HAS BEEN AND REMAINS REASONABLE.

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4. DESPITE VORSTER'S CATEGORIC UNDERTAKING IN PARLIAMENT ON JAN. 30 THAT SA "WILL FULFILL THE DUTY" TO MAKE NAMIBIA INDEPENDENT THIS YEAR AND HIS ASSERTION THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTIONS "MUST NOT BE DELAYED TOO LONG" (CAPE TOWN 0156), THE SAG ALMOST SEEMS TO BE INVITING JUSTIFICATIONS FOR FURTHER DELAY IN TAKING DEFINITIVE DECISIONS. THERE ARE OPENINGS TO BE EXPLOITED. THE FOLLOWING ARE STEPS WHICH THE CONTACT GROUP MAY WISH TO CONSIDER.

A) AN INFORMAL MESSAGE FROM THE CONTACT GROUP TO BOTHA: IN THIS MESSAGE, THE CONTACT GROUP COULD EXPRESS GRATIFICATION OVER BOTHA'S REITERATION IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS SINCE RETURNING FROM NEW YORK OF THE IMPORTANCE OF REACHING AN INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT AND HIS PUBLIC ASSURANCES THAT THE PROCESS OF SEEKING SUCH A SOLUTION IS CONTINUING. THE MESSAGE MIGHT GO ON TO SAY THAT THE CG HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE PRODUCTIVE EXCHANGE WHICH WE HAVE HAD WITH THE SAG IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS ON THE CLARIFICATION OF LANGUAGE ON CERTAIN PROVISIONS WHICH HAS SERVED TO NARROW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WESTERN PROPOSAL AND THE POSITION OF THE SAG. IN CONCLUSION, THE MESSAGE COULD SAY THAT THE CG REMAINS HOPEFUL ABOUT THE

PROSPECTS FOR COMING TO AN AGREEMENT AND THAT THE GROUP HOPES  
THE SAG WILL CONTINUE TO REFRAIN FROM UNILATERAL ACTIONS WHICH  
COULD INTERRUPT OR PREVENT FURTHER PROGRESS. THIS MESSAGE  
MIGHT BE CONVEYED TO BOTHA WHEN WE SEE HIM AS PER CAPE TOWN 373.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0380

B) PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION: WHATEVER  
THE SAG DECISION IT WILL JUSTIFY IT ON THE GROUNDS OF  
NAMIBIAN POPULAR WISHES. DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO  
WINDHOEK, BOTHA AGAIN STRESSED THIS POINT. THE ADMINISTRATOR  
GENERAL HAS BEEN RUSHING THROUGH HIS SOUNDNG OF OPINION  
(CAPE TOWN 0330) AND WE CAN ANTICIPATE THAT HIS FINDINGS  
WILL BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE SAG AS REFLECTED IN BRAND FOURIE'S  
REMARKS TO THE CAPE TOWN FIVE YESTERDAY (CAPE TOWN 373).  
THIS SITUATION AGAIN SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY OF PROPOSING  
AN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO SOUND OUT POPULAR VIEWS IN  
NAMIBIA (CAPE TOWN 0342). IT MIGHT BE MOST EFFECTIVE TO  
RAISE THE PROSPECT OF SUCH A PROPOSAL AT THE TIME THE  
CONTACT GROUP PRESENTS THE CLARIFIED SETTLEMENT PLAN TO THE  
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SOUTH AFRICANS AND SWAPO. IT COULD BE PRESENTED AS A COURSE THE CG INTENDED TO PURSUE SHOULD THERE BE NO AGREEMENT ON THE PLAN. IF ACCEPTED, THE PROPOSAL FOR A SOUNDING COMMISSION WOULD PROVIDE A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION, AND ASSUMING THE COMMISSION REPORT WAS BASICALLY FAVORABLE, IT WOULD MAKE IT MORE AWKWARD FOR BOTH THE SAG AND SWAPO TO REFUSE TO TAKE THE FEW REMAINING STEPS NECESSARY TO BRING THEM INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. THE CHANCES ARE THAT THE SAG AS WELL AS SWAPO WOULD BALK AT SUCH A SUGGESTION. NEVERTHELESS, DISCUSSION OF ITS REMIFICATIONS COULD PROVIDE US MORE TIME AND IT WOULD AT LEAST HAVE THE EFFECT OF CALLING THE SAG'S BLUFF IN REGARD TO THE ALLEGED SUPPORT OF ITS POSITION BY THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE.

C) ENCOURAGE PUBLIC STATEMENTS FROM SOUTH AFRICAN AS WELL AS NAMIBIAN INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS: THIS APPROACH ENVISIONS PERSONAL CONTACT BY WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES WITH INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA. WE WOULD BRIEF THESE CONTACTS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AND AS APPROPRIATE ENCOURAGE THEM PUBLICLY TO URGE THE SAG TO AVOID UNILATERAL STEPS THAT COULD PREJUDICE THE NEGOTIATIONS AND NOT TO REJECT THE WESTERN PROPOSAL ON THE BASIS OF THE FEW REMAINING DIFFERENCES. WITHOUT EXCLUDING OTHERS WE HAVE IN MIND FOCUSING PARTICULARLY ON GROUPS IN NAMIBIA SUCH AS: THE LIBERAL CHURCH LEADERS, LEADERS OF TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS, THE NNF, THE FEDERAL PARTY, AND SYMPATHETIC NEWSPAPER EDITORS. IN SOUTH AFRICA, MEMBERS OF THE FIVE WESTERN EMBASSIES WOULD CONCENTRATE ON BRIEFING NEWSPAPER EDITORS, OTHER OPINION MAKERS AND PROMINENT MPS. IN THIS CONNECTION, I FULLY SUPPORT THE DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CG'S PROPOSAL BE GIVEN WIDER CIRCULATION (REF. B). AN AUTHORITATIVE WRITTEN RESUME OF THE ESSENTIALS OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD GREATLY REINFORCE

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THE APPROACH.

5. THE THREE APPROACHES WOULD BE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE AND CONSISTENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S SUGGESTION THAT IN THE SHORT-TERM WE CONCENTRATE ON THE SAG (REF B). CONSEQUENTLY, I RECOMMEND THAT THE CONTACT GROUP CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING THE FIRST AND SECOND APPROACHES AND AUTHORIZE THE CAPE TOWN FIVE TO MOVE AHEAD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH THE THIRD APPROACH.

BOWDLER

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERIM GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS  
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**Draft Date:** 28 feb 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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